

Published Sunday June 22, 2008

Eppley embarks on \$17 million project to redo taxiway

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Next year it should be a little easier for planes to get around at Omaha's Eppley Airfield. The airport plans to spend \$17 million replacing a large part of one of the paths, called taxiways, that connect the terminals to the runway.

About 4,500 feet of a 40-year-old taxiway will be completely replaced. The asphalt taxiway will be replaced by concrete, which is stronger.

In addition, a shorter, completely new taxiway will be built to better connect other taxiways and the one that's being replaced.

"It's a constant maintenance issue," said Don Smithey, executive director of the Omaha Airport Authority, about the old taxiway.

He said more than \$13 million for the project will come from federal grants. The rest is being paid for by the airport authority.

The airport has commitments for most of the federal money, Smithey said, including a \$3.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation that was announced last week by U.S. Rep. Lee Terry, R-Neb.

The airport authority board awarded a contract for some of the project to Hawkins Construction Co. of Omaha last month. Smithey said the rest of the project will be awarded to Hawkins next month now that more federal funding has been secured.

The new shorter taxiway should be built this year and the replacement work will be done next year, Smithey said.

During construction, planes can use one of the several other taxiways at the airport, including a long one that runs parallel to the taxiway that will be replaced.

"The impact hopefully will be minimal," he said.

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